

**Enhancing Innovative Practices in Women Owned Palm Oil Distillation Businesses  
Through the Living Lab Approach  
Lessons from Kazuramimba Village, Kigoma Region  
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**Abstract**

This paper describes the results of phase one of the four phases of the palm oil distillation Living Lab initiative that is being implemented under the FormIT intermediary Living Lab methodology in Kazuramimba village, Uvinza District, Kigoma region. The purpose of the Living Lab initiative is to enhance women's indigenous innovative practices in palm oil distillation within the framework of business incubation. The paper starts with a conceptual overview of the Living Lab methodology and proceeds to explain how the FormIT methodology is being applied to enhance innovative practices among women-owned small and medium palm oil distillation businesses in Kazuramimba village. The FormIT approach include simulating a real-life business environment in which women entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply their indigenous business knowledge in co-creating innovative techniques that could improve the traditional methods of palm oil distillation. Ten cooperative groups of women entrepreneurs consisting 270 members are participating in the Living Lab FormIT experimentation through "unconference" meetings and focus group discussions on their current situation, challenges, opportunities and the required support. The experience of the first phase reported herein has provided the women with insights about how their entrepreneurial innovative potentials can help them augment their indigenous entrepreneurship knowledge and skills to produce quality products and services that match market standards and consumer needs.

**Key words:** Living Lab, FormIT, concept design, women innovative practices, palm oil distillation